

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed October 27, 2010, has been received and its contents carefully noted. Claims 1-12 were pending. Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12 were rejected. Claims 5 and 7 were objected to by the Examiner. Claim 10 was allowed. By this Response, claims 1-4, 6 and 10 have been amended and claims 5 and 7 have been canceled. Support may be found in the specification and the claims as originally filed. No statutory new matter has been added. Therefore, reconsideration and entry of the claims, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the specification for including a title which the Examiner deemed to be non-descriptive of the invention to which the claims are directed.

As provided above, Applicant has amended the specification to include a title which clearly describes an embodiment of the invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the objection to the specification may be withdrawn in view of the amendment to the title.

Objection to the Claims

The Examiner objected to claims 5 and 7 as being dependent upon rejected base claims. The Examiner further indicated that claims 5 and 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant has amended base claims 4 and 6 to include the features of previously dependent and now canceled claims 5 and 7. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the objection to claims 5 and 7 are hereby moot, and that claims 4 and 6 are allowable in view of the amendment to the claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action mailed October 27, 2010 the Examiner allowed claim 10 and indicated that claims 5 and 7 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

Applicants submit that claim 10 as amended remains allowable, as indicated by the

Examiner. In addition, Applicant has amended base claims 4 and 6 to include features of claims 5 and 7. Therefore, as indicated by the Examiner, Applicant submits that amended claims 4, 6 and 10 are hereby allowable. Also, because claims 8, 9, 11 and 12 depend from and therefore include all the limitations of claims 4 and 6, Applicant submits that these claims are likewise allowable.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(a) and 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Kikushima et al. (JP 2004-350015). The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaya et al. (US 7,112,915).

As seen above, independent claims 4, 6 and 10, as well as those claims depending thereon, presently stand in condition for allowance. Relative to claim 1, by this response Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the feature of “a gap from at least one side surface of the tine to the groove is gradually increased toward the base, with at least a part of the gap being gradually increased linearly.”

Applicant submits that Kikushima and Tanaya do not, alone or in combination, teach or suggest: (i) the gradual increase of the gap comprising a linear increase in at least a part of the gap, as set forth in claim 1.

Applicant further submits that the remaining references cited by the Examiner do not remedy this deficiency of Kikushima and Tanaya. Specifically, the remaining references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest feature (i) above.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, is novel and unobvious over Kikushima and Tanaya. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn and the claim allowed. Also, because claims 2 and 3 depend from and therefore include all the limitations of claim 1, Applicant submits that these claims are likewise allowable.

Request for Interview

Either a telephonic or an in-person interview is respectfully requested should there be any remaining issues.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Official action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

It is not believed that extensions of time are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in accompanying documents. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a), and any fees required therefor are hereby authorized to be charged to **Deposit Account No. 02-4300**, Attorney Docket No. **032213 R 044**.

Respectfully submitted,
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